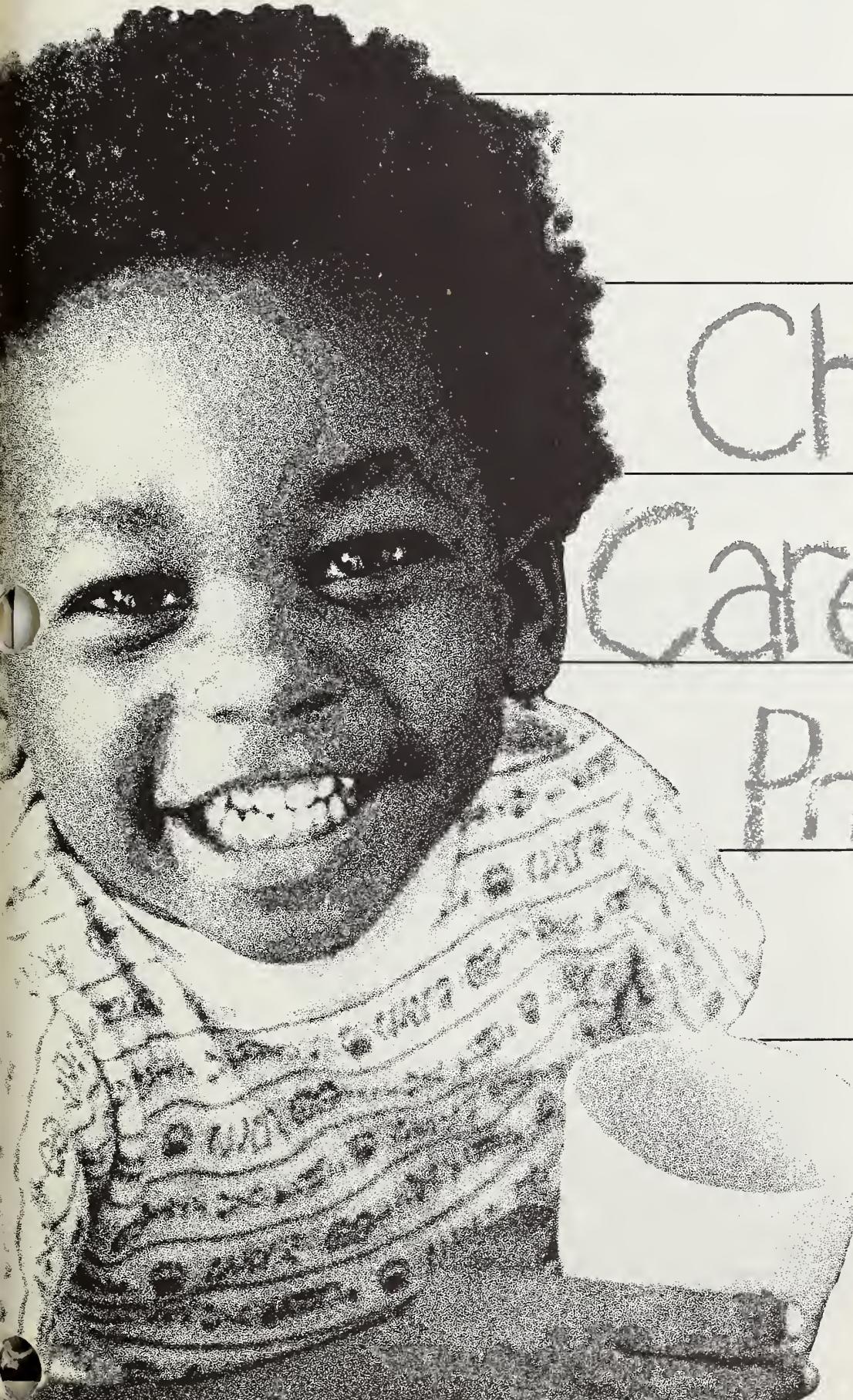


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Food & Nutrition

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Child Care Food Program

This issue is all about the Child Care Food Program — how it works, who runs it, and who may join.

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Child Care Food Program

When people think of child care, they might not think of food. But food is an important part of every child's day, and a child care center cannot provide good care without providing good food.

This issue of **FOOD AND NUTRITION** is devoted to the Child Care Food Program, a nationwide program designed to help child care centers and day care homes serve nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks. Administered by USDA in cooperation with State and local agencies, the program provides financial aid as well as other types of assistance.

The Child Care Food Program began in 1968 as part of a 3-year pilot program known as the Special Food Service Program for Children. Designed originally to serve especially needy children, the pilot program provided assistance to nonresidential child care centers serving children from low-income areas or from areas with significant numbers of working mothers.

In October 1975, new child nutrition legislation, Public Law 94-105, expanded and refocused the program. The law extended eligibility to all nonprofit day care centers—those serving non-needy as well as needy areas.

It also opened participation to family and group day care homes, allowing them to join under the sponsorship of a qualifying institution or organization.

When Public Law 94-105 was passed, some 425,000 children were benefiting from the program. That figure has since grown to nearly 550,000, but there are still many thousands of children in centers and homes that have not yet joined even though they are eligible.

What blocks their participation? Some centers and homes simply

don't know about the program. Others may have heard about it, but don't understand it or are afraid participation will mean administrative headaches and red tape.

Many centers get funding from several sources, so recordkeeping is already a big job—why complicate it further?

Some center staffs and day care providers are concerned about the program's meal requirements. Especially if they have had little training in nutrition and food service management, they may wonder how they would learn to operate the program according to Federal regulations. Besides, if they're used to running their programs just the way they want, they may not like the idea of involving anyone else.

The following articles address these concerns. The first is an introductory article with questions and answers basic to an understanding of the program. The rest are features about people who are involved in the program in a number of ways.

Some are program coordinators or State agencies. Others are people who administer or actually operate the program at the local level—in child care centers and day care homes, and in organizations which act as sponsors for centers and homes.

The articles show how people are working together to build good programs, enlist participants, provide training, and develop solutions to special problems, such as keeping accurate records.



How does it work?

What is the Child Care Food Program and what kinds of assistance does it provide?

The Child Care Food Program is a nationwide program authorized by Section 17 of the National School Lunch Act. The program helps child care centers and family and group day care homes serve nutritious, well-balanced meals.

The program offers several kinds of assistance to help centers and day care homes initiate, maintain, or expand food service programs:

Reimbursement for meals. Participating centers and homes receive cash reimbursements based on the number of breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks they serve. The rate of reimbursement varies according to the family incomes of the children.

Food assistance. USDA makes available a variety of donated foods to use in the program. States may choose to accept these foods and distribute them to participating centers and homes, or, they may choose to receive the cash value of the foods and distribute cash payments to centers and homes. Most States distribute cash instead of foods.

Equipment assistance. In many areas, local resources cannot provide all the equipment needed to set up and maintain food services. Through the program, centers and homes may apply for funds to help buy or rent equipment for storing, preparing, moving and serving food.

Technical assistance and guidance. State and Federal program coordinators provide technical assistance and guidance. Through publications, workshops, and onsite visits, they offer help with program requirements, meal patterns, and food service management.

What are the program's eligibility requirements?

Many different child care programs are eligible for the Child Care Food Program. Basically, they fall into two categories: **child**

care centers, which may participate on their own or under the auspices of a qualified sponsoring organization; and, **family and group day care homes**, which must participate under the auspices of a qualified sponsoring organization.

Outlined below are the eligibility requirements for child care centers, day care homes, and sponsoring organizations.

Child care centers. Child care centers may join the program if they are nonprofit and provide organized child care in nonresidential, non-school situations. To be eligible, the centers must:

- Have, or have applied for, a tax-exempt certificate from the Internal Revenue Service under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954; or be participating in another federally funded program requiring tax-exempt status.

- Have a license or approval as a child care institution from Federal, State, or local governments. Or, if a State has no licensing requirements, they must meet the Federal Inter-agency Day Care requirements.

Some examples of eligible centers include those run by churches, settlement houses, community action agencies, neighborhood organizations, Head Start centers, afterschool recreation programs, and institutions providing day care services for handicapped children.

Day care homes. Family and group day care homes may join the program if they provide organized child care, and if they:

- Have a qualified sponsoring organization.
- Have a license or approval as a child care institution from Federal, State, or local governments.

Family day care homes generally have up to six children in attendance, including the provider's own children. Group day care homes generally have up to 10 children in attendance, in-

cluding the provider's own children.

Sponsoring organizations. Organizations may join the program as sponsors if they are nonprofit institutions, and if they agree to be responsible for the finances, recordkeeping, and administration of the program in each child care center or day care home they serve.

To be eligible, sponsoring organizations must have, or have applied for, a tax-exempt certificate from the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Or, they must be participating in another federally funded program requiring tax-exempt status.

Sponsoring organizations must provide supervisory and technical aid to centers and day care homes under their authority.

How is the Child Care Food Program administered?

On the national level, the Child Care Food Program is administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. On the State level, the program is administered by an appropriate State agency, usually the State Department of Education. However, in some States, the program is administered directly by FNS regional offices.

The Federal coordinators. Basically, the role of the Food and Nutrition Service is to provide overall guidance and technical assistance. FNS staff members write and publish the rules and regulations governing the operation of the program. They also write guidelines, develop and test meal patterns, and set policy on when and where audits will be conducted.

In addition, FNS personnel provide training for people in State agencies and evaluate the State agencies' performance in operating the program. They distribute Child Care Food Program funds to State agencies, which in turn distribute the funds to participating centers and sponsoring organizations.

The State agency role. State agency personnel work directly with sponsoring agencies and child care

Who May Join?

centers. They explain the program to potential participants, and approve or disapprove their applications.

They provide regulatory information to participating centers and sponsors, along with program guidance material and technical assistance. They conduct workshops and training sessions on subjects like reimbursement procedures, meal requirements, nutrition education, and filling out forms. They also receive and process claims for reimbursement.

Periodically, State agency people conduct audits to evaluate local sponsoring organizations and independent child care centers in the following areas: complying with program regulations; meeting meal requirements; keeping records; and preparing accurate reports.

In the 15 States in which FNS currently administers the program directly, the FNS regional office staffs work directly with centers and sponsoring organizations and offer the same services as State agencies.

What are the responsibilities of participating child care centers and sponsoring organizations?

If child care centers join the program independent of sponsoring organizations, they must be responsible for their own program finances and for the administration of the food service program. Essentially, their responsibilities are to:

- Serve nutritious meals that meet program requirements.
- Keep records on food service operations and participation.
- Report to the administering State agency the information needed for reimbursement purposes.

To determine reimbursement, the State agency needs information on: the family sizes and incomes of participating children; the numbers of breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks served; and the operating costs of the food service.

Sponsoring organizations are responsible for the program finances

and administration of the food service program in each center and home under their jurisdiction. Sponsors must:

- Make sure centers and homes serve nutritious meals that meet program requirements.
- Compile and keep, for every center and home, information needed for reimbursement purposes.
- Prepare and file with the State agency all claims for reimbursement.
- Distribute reimbursement payments to participating centers and homes.

Both independent centers and sponsoring organizations also have training responsibilities. They must make sure center personnel and family day care providers get the training they need to serve nutritious meals, manage the food service, and keep accurate records. Training assistance is available from State and Federal program administrators.

What are the responsibilities of participating family and group day care homes?

Family and group day care homes must serve nutritious meals that meet the program's meal requirements. Each home must provide its sponsoring organization with the information the sponsor needs to keep accurate records and to prepare claims for reimbursement.

Sponsors work with homes on an individual basis to see that they carry out these responsibilities and any other responsibilities the sponsoring organization assigns.

How many meals may centers and homes serve?

The Child Care Food Program will provide reimbursement for up to three meals and two snacks per day. Participating centers and homes may serve breakfast, lunch, supper, and a mid-morning and mid-

afternoon snack.

Centers and homes may prepare the meals themselves; they may obtain them from a food service facility in a local school; or they may obtain them by contracting with a food service management company.

All meals served in the program must meet the minimum nutritional requirements set by USDA.

Q How does reimbursement work?

A As authorized by law, USDA provides a certain amount of Federal money to State agencies for each meal or snack served to participating children. The amount of money varies according to the number of children served within the State.

Except where FNS regional offices administer the program directly, State agencies compute and distribute reimbursement, using information a center or sponsor has submitted in its monthly claim.

Reimbursing child care centers. To determine the amount of reimbursement a child care center will receive for a particular month, a State needs to know:

- The total numbers of breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks the center has served.
- The need of enrolled children as reflected in family size and income.
- The cost of producing the meals.

Reimbursement is always the lesser of: (1) the meals served times the assigned rates of payment for those meals; or (2) the cost of producing the meals.

The assigned rates of payment usually differ for each center and reflect the need of participating children. They are based on national rates set and adjusted twice a year by USDA.

Reimbursing sponsoring organizations. To determine the amount of reimbursement a sponsoring organization will receive, State agencies generally use the same approach.

Who runs it?

described above.

However, organizations sponsoring day care homes have an option not available to child care centers or their sponsoring organizations.

Instead of having to keep records of food purchases, these sponsoring organizations may choose to claim reimbursement on the basis of special rates for breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks. These are flat rates, known as food cost factors. Like the national rates of payment, the food cost factors are set and adjusted twice a year by USDA.

Q What types of records will participants have to keep?

Recordkeeping requirements vary from State to State. However, to receive the maximum

reimbursement, all centers and sponsors must keep records on the family sizes and incomes of enrolled children and on any costs they claim for reimbursement.

Generally, States require centers and sponsoring organizations to keep records of direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include food, labor, and non-food supplies. They also include the costs involved in planning, organizing, and supervising the program. Indirect costs include depreciation of kitchen equipment and a prorated share of utilities.

To simplify recordkeeping, many centers and homes elect to be reimbursed only for food and labor. This procedure greatly simplifies record-keeping responsibilities.

Some States require centers and

sponsors to keep track of food on an "as used" basis. Others allow them to keep track of food purchases. In States where FNS Regional Offices administer the program, centers must keep track of food actually used.

In family and group day care homes using the predetermined food cost factor for reimbursement, it is not necessary for homes to keep records on food purchased or used. □

by Michael McAteer

For further information: Contact the State Department of Education or the nearest regional office of the Food and Nutrition Service. The FNS regional offices are in: San Francisco; Dallas; Atlanta; Denver; Chicago; Burlington, Massachusetts; and Robbinsville, New Jersey.



Building a Program

What does it take to build a good Child Care Food Program? According to the people featured in the following three articles, it takes initiative, planning, imagination, and lots of teamwork.

The articles show how the CCFP actually works in individual child care centers and day care homes. The articles also illustrate the role of sponsoring organizations and highlight ways they have found to make the program an enjoyable experience for the people who run it, as well as for the children who take part.

People at Portsmouth make food a priority

"It's a Small World—A Festival of Food and Song" was the theme of last summer's activities at the Portsmouth Day Care Center in Portsmouth, Virginia. The theme is a particularly appropriate one for a child care center whose staff makes meals educational as well as enjoyable.

The Portsmouth center feeds an average of 35 children a hot lunch and two snacks daily. Often meals corre-



spond to the day's lessons.

The center serves children from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Many of the children come from families who live just above the poverty level. Some are on welfare. However, some families are economically well off and bring their children to get what they consider first-rate day care. Enrollment fees are based on a sliding scale which relates to the family's income, size and needs.

Although the center is licensed for 50 children, the staff feels 35 is nearly an ideal, manageable size for the available resources. Portsmouth has seven paid staff members—four full-time teachers, a cook, an assistant cook, and a center director.

Sponsored by an association

The Portsmouth Day Care Center is sponsored by the Tidewater Child Care Association, a United Fund agency. The association pays the salaries of the center staff; it also employs an executive director and a bookkeeper, who spend part of their time at the center.

Because the staff is so small, responsibilities often voluntarily overlap. Executive director Evelyn Green and center director Florelle Whitehurst spend time in the kitchen, the classrooms, the office and with the staff. Audrey Nyman, the bookkeeper, sometimes spends time with the children, as do the cooks, Mary Hayes and Inez Wingate.

The teachers and volunteer assistants use the kitchen facilities for weekly cooking activities with the children and also assist in food preparation when needed.

Seldom short-handed

Although the Portsmouth Day Care Center has funds to hire only seven full-time staff members, they are seldom short-handed. Community resources are often used to fill out the meager staff.

For example, high school students from a nearby alternative school help the four full-time teachers, center director, and kitchen staff. These students, many of whom are slow-learners or have behavioral problems, receive valuable on-the-job training at the center.

Students from local community colleges temporarily join the staff as part of work-study internship programs. An on-the-job trainee from the Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority has been a valuable resource for both the office and the classroom this year. The center also benefits from the services of several young people placed through the Summer Youth Employment Program of the local anti-poverty agency.

Parents get involved

In addition to general community involvement, the center often asks the advice and help of parents on new and ongoing projects. Center director Florelle Whitehurst offers an open invitation for parents to visit and participate in the center's activities. The day care center has much contact with parents through letters, meetings, informal talks. Both are highly supportive of each other.

"Parents are interested, for instance, in the menus we prepare," says Ms. Whitehurst. "We post menus in several places in the center for families to see. Often they will prepare their children's favorites at home."

The center and parents exchange favorite menus and recipes. Parents, board members and visitors often join the children for meals at a small cost.

Importance of family stressed

The importance of family is stressed consistently with the children, in many different ways.

"We are trying to provide an extended family experience," says Evelyn Green. "We are not a substitute for the home. These children come from strong families, despite any problems they may have."

"We consider ourselves as a resource for the children to add to their family experience," she continues. "We impress on them that they are special because they have a chance to extend their families. Food shopping is one family-type activity we plan with the children. Gardening is another. Both offer a variety of learning experiences."

Ms. Green explains that the



children have worked on a number of gardening projects this year. They've grown cabbage, tomatoes, beans and mints in pots indoors. They've also grown orange, grapefruit, pineapple and avocado plants.

"We try to teach the children that food is not just something that comes from the kitchen or appears magically on the tables," the association director says. "That's why we involve the children in growing food, and in preparing and serving it as well."

Meals served family-style

Meals at the center are served family style, and the children frequently help with preparation. They also set the tables and help clear them after meals. This teaches responsibility and reinforces the family concept. It also reinforces number concepts and enhances language development through discussions about the utensils, food, sharing duties, and so forth.

Teachers and children eat together, and table talk often centers on food.

"Most of the children finish everything on their plates," says Evelyn Green. "We find that talking about different foods and having the children participate in cooking activities makes them open-minded about foods. With activities and conversation, the children are much more likely to try new foods and to accept them, and there is usually little waste."

Summer meals have themes

While food-related activities are a regular part of Portsmouth's year-round program, they get special attention during the summer months. Each summer, the center selects a central theme for its activities.

This past summer, activities expanded the children's awareness of this "small world." Through books, songs, arts and crafts, they learned about different countries and the people who live in them. Menus featured foods from the countries the children were studying.

The year before, activities and menus had a historic theme—"Celebrating Cultures: the Afro-American, the Indian, and the Anglo-Saxon Cultures in Early Virginia."

The children grew vegetables indigenous to the three cultures in three separate gardens and learned about the vegetables as they watched them grow. During July and August, the center served a variety of meals from



At the Portsmouth Center, children enjoy nourishing meals and a variety of food-related activities.

the three cultures, using vegetables from the gardens.

Food is important

"Food is important for children in many ways," says Evelyn Green, adding that for some of the Portsmouth children, lunch at the center is the main meal of the day.

"That's why we concentrate so heavily on food in our curriculum," she says. "And that's why we value the help we get from USDA."

Until last winter, the center received USDA-donated foods. However, like all Virginia participants in the Child Care Food Program, the center now receives cash instead of foods.

The association's bookkeeper, Audrey Nyman, prefers the new arrangement. "We enjoyed the high quality of food we received," she says. "But shipments were unpredictable, and so, in a way, cash makes it easier for us to plan. This business is challenging enough with our enrollment varying so much from week to week."

Chart helps with reporting

Florelle Whitehurst and the rest of the staff help Ms. Nyman with her recordkeeping responsibilities. The teachers count attendance daily on mimeographed charts. They designate the number of meals served each day, tally them for the week, and turn the records in to the office.

Ms. Nyman keeps a running total of meals served for the month. Together, Ms. Nyman and Ms. Whitehurst keep track of the family incomes of all the children.

Recordkeeping and reporting are complicated by the number of agencies providing assistance to the center. To make reporting as easy as possible, Ms. Green has developed a large chart which she keeps on a wall of her office.

The chart lists all the agencies which give the center assistance and the various agencies or vendors with whom the center has contracts. The chart indicates the agency, the type of report, and the frequency of reporting. Keeping the chart helps Ms. Green organize the recordkeeping duties more efficiently for the office staff.

Ms. Whitehurst and Ms. Nyman keep account of the inventory, and cooks assist with this duty.

"The cooks try to keep track of what they use daily," Ms. Green explains,

"but they have found errors in their accounting that way, and so they must double check by taking inventory at the end of each month."

Ms. Whitehurst and Ms. Wingate plan the menus the last week each month around the inventory still on hand. They must keep the center's limited storage space in mind when planning the new food orders for the month. Ms. Nyman orders the food from three main sources, all wholesalers in the area.

On occasion, teachers bring in foods or fresh produce for a special meal or demonstration. Usually teachers buy these as treats to the children and the center, so they are not counted for reimbursement.

Proud of the kitchen

The staff is proud of the center's kitchen, which they keep sparkling clean. The building had been used as a day care center before the Portsmouth Day Care Center took over, so some of the kitchen facilities—like the freezer, refrigerator, and stove—were already installed. With funds from USDA, the association bought a new hood, stainless steel table, and cooking and serving utensils.

The day care center is located in a low-income area of Portsmouth, and it is surrounded by barren yards and dilapidated housing. But the center itself is cheery and bright, and the association has made many improvements in the building with revenue-sharing funds from the city.

The center is anticipating additional revenue-sharing funds to transform the bare grounds into an exciting play area. A member of the art faculty of Old Dominion College has designed some beautiful and functional play structures for the area. They now have to walk several blocks to use playground equipment.

"If you ask for help, you get it," says Ms. Green.

The first children arrive at the Portsmouth Center at 7:00 a.m., and the last ones leave at 5:30 p.m.

"Day care is tiring and taxing," says Evelyn Green. "We always have to create new ways to stretch our limited resources."

"But we watch the children grow and learn and see parents show their confidence in us, and we know it's all worthwhile."

Linda Feldman

A look at a New Hampshire family day care program

Each weekday at about 7:15 a.m., 2-year-old Kevin McBrearty arrives at Carol Hall's house on Mitchell Street in Manchester, New Hampshire. Kevin spends a good part of his day in the Hall's comfortable family room kitchen in the company of Tiffany, and 8 months, Mark, also 2 years old, and Adam and Jennifer, both age 3.

Kevin and the other children are receiving family day care in Carol Hall's home. Only two of them are related—Tiffany and Mark Lambiris are brother and sister.

During the 8 or 9 hours they spend with Carol Hall, the children play, take naps, go for walks, and eat lunch as well as snacks. Because she is a licensed day care mother associated with a recognized sponsoring agency, Ms. Hall can receive reimbursement for the snacks and lunches through the Child Care Food Program.

Sponsored by GMCCA

Ms. Hall's "sponsor" is the Greater Manchester Child Care Association (GMCCA), which provides administrative services to 21 homes serving approximately 60 children. The agency also operates two day care centers for approximately 340 children, including 42 children who come for after-school activities. Generally younger children, aged 3 months to 3 years, go to the homes.

Carol Hall might have chosen to be



"independent," but the association relieves her of the responsibility of interviewing parents, accepting children and making financial arrangements.

GMCCA sponsorship offers Ms. Hall other benefits as well, for example, vacation and sick pay, and Social Security benefits.

Like the other family day care providers sponsored by GMCCA, Ms. Hall receives a separate check for the meals she serves. USDA reimburses the association on the basis of the children's family incomes, but GMCCA gives providers the same amount for each child. That amount is always at least as great as the Federal payment the association gets from USDA.

"Children from families of all income levels may be in a single home," says Larry White, GMCCA executive director. "For planning purposes, we find it best to give the mothers a flat rate they can count on."

Training provided

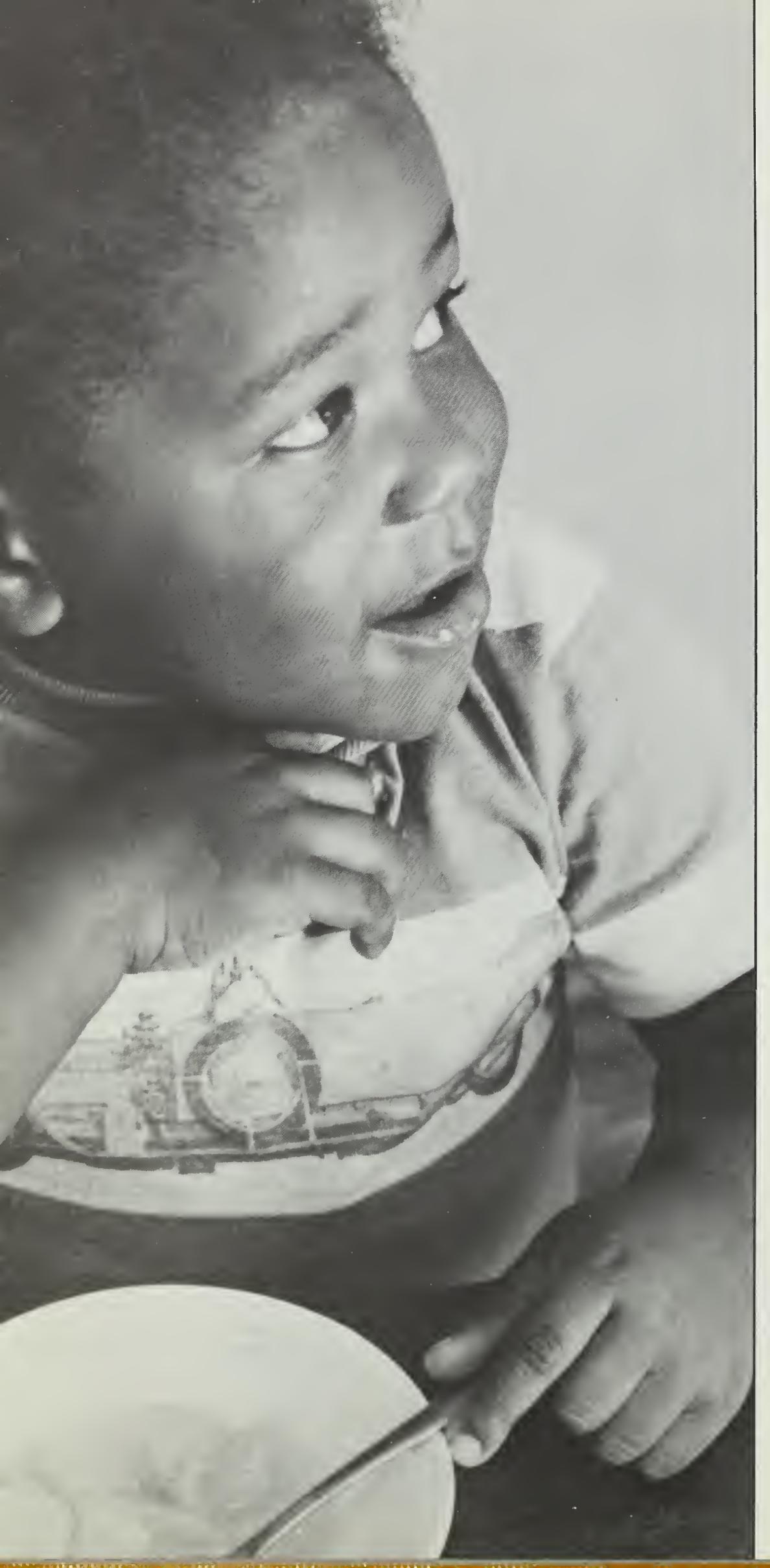
GMCCA staff members work closely with the family day care mothers to make sure they understand the meal pattern and portion requirements set by USDA. The mothers may serve breakfast, lunch, and a morning and afternoon snack. They must keep records of the number of meals served, but they do not have to record food, labor, or other costs.

As part of its total training package, GMCCA includes sessions on nutrition and Child Care Food Program requirements. Twice a year, the association holds ten 2-hour evening sessions for new day care mothers.

Family day care consultant Sarah Chamberlain arranges the meetings, which cover various aspects of child development, first aid, home safety, and nutrition. Often, volunteer instructors lead the training seminars.

The volunteer instructor for a recent nutrition training program was home economist Ellen McDevitt, formerly a member of the Food and Nutrition Service staff in Washington, D.C. Ms. McDevitt began the session with a label quiz in which she asked the mothers to identify familiar items—such as chicken soup and instant potatoes—from the ingredients listed on the labels. This led to a dis-

Carol Hall often serves hot meals she has prepared in advance.



cussion on grocery shopping.

"I tell the mothers they have a responsibility to the children to give them the best food possible, and a responsibility to themselves to get it at the best price," Ms. McDevitt says.

Materials welcomed

A Planning Guide for Food Service in Child Care Centers, an FNS publication, was Ms. McDevitt's source for handouts during a discussion on meal patterns and snacks. She duplicated and distributed the pages listing bread products, vitamins A and C and iron, "finger foods," and the amounts required for each meal.

As Ellen McDevitt explains, many mothers had come to the session convinced that a hot meal is always best. "But," she says "they quickly learned that cold finger foods such as cheese cubes, chunks of vegetables, and fruit with milk can be more nutritious than hot entrees like canned pastas with tomato sauce." Ms. McDevitt said the mothers welcomed the handouts and the suggestions.

GMCCA often provides books and games designed to teach the children nutrition concepts and food identification. One of the GMCCA mothers, Terry Desruisseaux, was so excited about the materials she received she decided to write for more. Ms. Desruisseaux found a number of government and private sources, and she got enough materials to rotate the wall decorations in the children's playroom every few months.

Providers get individual help

Every Thursday, the family day care mothers submit their menus for the week. GMCCA asks the mothers to plan menus in advance but submit them as the week closes. GMCCA's director of child care homes, Carole Treen, and Jean Roebuck, her administrative assistant, review the menus, noting any mothers who need further guidance on nutritional matters. They make regular monthly visits to the homes, and can provide help at that time.

GMCCA recognizes the importance of nutrition. When the association accepts a child for family day care, the staff nutritionist makes an assessment of the child's nutritional needs and advises the day care mother accordingly.

Then, immediately after placement,

staff members make extra visits and phone calls to check on how well the child is adjusting and to discuss any problems the mother might be having in getting the child to accept food. GMCCA also discusses the child's nutritional needs with his or her actual parents.

Flexibility is important

In Carol Hall's home there are no special nutrition problems. She's now concentrating on getting Tiffany to eat more table foods and to rely less on the bottle.

Independent Kevin insists on feeding himself, so she must watch carefully to see that he eats the right things. Mark still wants a little help with his spoon.

Ms. Hall recently welcomed the assistance of foster grandparent Marion Shepherd, who comes every day to help with the busy mealtime.

According to GMCCA director Carole Treen, flexibility and individuality are the keys to successful family day care. For example, because Carol Hall likes to take the children for a morning outing, she usually prepares their noon meal the night before it is served. Another mother might prefer to get up before her family to begin the meal.

In some homes, fathers lend a hand. Carol Hall's husband, Bradley, helps with the big shopping, done twice a month. The association has one couple, Donna and Jeff Kent, who work together to care for 10 children.

"A close relationship with the caregiver is important in the development of the baby and toddler," says Carole Treen, discussing the reasons why she feels family day care is an excellent way to care for small children.

"It is easier for the children's parents, too," she notes, adding that children are accepted as early as 3 months.

"And a big advantage is flexibility of location, which makes it possible to place children in neighborhoods where they live," she adds. "It's better for very young children to be in small places relating to just a few children."

A source of support

Carole Treen and her agency provide much support to Manchester's family day care mothers. The association's clerical and fiscal agents are necessary for regular payments to homes. But, as the family day care mothers or fathers are quick

to point out, the agency provides other sources of support, which are equally significant. Advice, training, and encouragement are among the most important.

by Catherine Tim Jensen

Some advice from the people at St. Alban's

In the Coconut Grove area of Miami, Florida, many mothers have found a solution to their day care problems in a family day care program run by St. Alban's Day Nursery, Inc. Under this program, children from 6 weeks to 3 years of age are cared for in private homes throughout the area.

St. Alban's child care efforts began back in 1949, when a local pastor enlisted the help of the Coconut Grove Citizen's Committee for Slum Clearance. With a rent-free building contributed by a local church, \$100 from the citizen's committee, and donations of supplies from local merchants, St. Alban's began its first year as a nonprofit, nondenominational child care agency.

Family care began in 1966

St. Alban's confined its child care efforts to group day care for older preschool children until 1965, when it received a grant from the Florida State Board of Public Welfare to add an experimental project in family day care. The following year, St. Alban's opened its first family day care home.

Since then, the family day care program has expanded to 25 homes providing care for 125 infants and toddlers. In addition, the agency has two substitute homes which are used when a family day care mother is sick or on vacation.

Each family day care home is limited to a maximum of five children, with no more than three infants (18 months or younger) in any one home. The program operates year-round, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the child's parents responsible for transportation to and from the day care home.

St. Alban's pays family day care mothers \$85 a month for each child in their care. St. Alban's also pro-

vides them with all their supplies, including disposable diapers, toys, cots, small tables and chairs, and equipment for measuring food portions. Since October 1976, the family day care mothers have been reimbursed for food costs through the Child Care Food Program.

Homes keep daily records

The children eat breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack at the day care homes. Each day care mother has a book in which she keeps her food service records, including menus and amounts of food served.

St. Alban's provides the books as well as special forms for recording the number of children served at each meal. After the afternoon snack, the day care mothers phone these figures in to the center, where the center's clerical staff records and totals them on similar forms.

Most of the family day care mothers say that the food service aspect of the program is easy to handle. The majority of these women have already raised families of their own, so they're used to shopping and cooking for a group. And since their reimbursement is based upon a national scale of food costs, rather than the cost of the ingredients, they can shop for and prepare the children's food with their families'. They do not have to worry about keeping supplies separate.

Several agencies provide assistance

All meals served must meet the nutritional requirements set by FNS. Although the day care mothers decide what meals they will serve, they often use suggested menus provided by the local child development agency, the State Department of Education, or by St. Alban's food service supervisor.

St. Alban's, which has multiple funding sources in the community, handles all the financial details of the program. The agency pays the family day care mothers' salaries, collects and distributes food reimbursements from FNS, and collects child care fees from the children's parents. Fees are based on a sliding scale, according to ability to pay, and many children attend free. An accounting firm handles St. Alban's bookkeeping, and United

Way provides the agency with data processing services.

Suggestions from St. Alban's

How do you go about setting up and administering a family day care program? James Callier, administrator of St. Alban's family day care program, and Sallie Walker, the agency's executive director, offered some suggestions.

First, find out whether or not there is actually a need for the program in your community. "We did a survey of parents at the center and determined that many needed family day care," Ms. Walker said.

Second, be careful whom you recruit for family day care mothers. St. Alban's was able to start off by employing parents of children at the center. Now the agency doesn't have to do much recruiting, because women hear about the program from their friends and apply on their own.

"We don't require them to have any exceptional educational background," Mr. Callier noted, "just a love of children." St. Alban's does require, however, that they all meet State and local licensing requirements, and that they have three references from the community.

Make sure that the agency and home has the proper contracts and the proper insurance, to determine and cover liability in case of an accident.

St. Alban's has written contracts or agreements between itself and the family day care mother, itself and the parents, and between the family day care mother and the parents. These contracts were particularly important when the agency first began the family day care program, because at that time student accident insurance wasn't available for children under 2½ years old.

Now, if a child is injured in the home, he or she is covered by this insurance. And if a staff member is injured while visiting the family day care home, he or she is covered under workmen's compensation. St. Alban's

also encourages the family day care mothers to have home-owners insurance, in case a parent is injured in the day care home.

As Ms. Walker noted, however, thanks to close supervision, they have been able to keep accidents to a minimum.

Have an orientation period for training new family day care mothers. St. Alban's uses several methods. They invite new day care mothers to observe activities in another family day care home. They arrange for one of the agency social workers to visit the new day care mother and help her set up her home.

And sometimes they enroll new day care mothers in a noncredit course at the University of Miami—"Interacting with Infants and Toddlers." In this case, St. Alban's pays the tuition.

"We have a close working relationship with the University of Miami," Ms. Walker explained, noting that university students often observe at the family day care homes as well as at the center.

Plan an educational program for both staff and parents. Mr. Callier has monthly workshops for the family day care mothers on topics such as nutrition, arts and crafts, language development, music and health. He and other St. Alban's staff members, in turn, attend workshops on nutrition and menu planning sponsored by the State Department of Education.

St. Alban's also has PTA meetings for both the day care mothers and the natural parents. In addition, each year the parents are involved in a fund-raising activity and a family picnic.

Involve people who care. The people at St. Alban's are proud of their program and of the dedication of the staff. "Most of the staff members were making little money in the beginning, but they stayed for the love of the children," said Sallie Walker. "Loyalty and dedication—they make a good program." □

By Linda Klein

Enlisting Centers and Homes

Getting the program to the people it's designed to serve. That's the goal of what's often called "outreach," and good outreach is essential for a program to be effective.

In the Child Care Food Program, State program coordinators and sponsoring agencies are most directly involved in outreach efforts. It's part of the State coordinator's job to develop ways to inform potential participants about the program and to explain how it works. Sponsoring organizations perform a similar function in enlisting and working with day care homes and centers.

These articles are about two outreach programs—one carried out by a State coordinator, the other by a family day care sponsor. They're full of ideas on how to "get out the word" to potential participants, and then to encourage the continuing participation of those who have already joined.

Michigan's coordinator uses a variety of approaches

In Michigan, Child Care Food Program coordinator Zoe Slagle has found success with a variety of outreach efforts. She says her most valuable asset is her close working relationship with the State's 33 licensing consultants, who discuss the program with the staffs of the centers they visit.

Also important are the contacts Ms. Slagle makes by working with the media, meeting with advocacy groups, and speaking at workshops. Last year she attended 27 workshops to explain the program. Ten were workshops she organized herself.

Whatever approach she's using, the State coordinator has available a number of good informational materials. She's put together a number of publications, and she gets additional materials from the Food and

School Food Service Association, and other sources.

As Zoe Slagle sees it, her job as State coordinator is not only to explain and monitor the Child Care Food Program, but to actively seek ways to help centers run it smoothly.

Through personal visits and phone calls, she pays close attention to the centers and their problems. This close attention has paid off in valuable "word of mouth advertising," as staffs of participating centers have shared their experiences and encouraged others to join.

Here are more details on how Ms. Slagle works to enlist new centers and to encourage the continuing participation of centers which are already taking part:

Working with licensing consultants

Zoe Slagle says the key to her outreach program is the help she gets from the Department of Social Service's 33 licensing consultants, who make periodic visits to all the child care centers in the State.

When the consultants are kept well-informed through meetings and special mailings, they can play a valuable role in explaining the program to nonparticipating centers. They can also discuss the program with participating centers and let the State coordinator know of any problems the centers are having.

During their visits to new centers or to established centers which have not yet joined, the licensing consultants explain the Child Care Food Program and tell the directors how to contact Zoe Slagle.

Speaking at workshops

Speaking at workshops is second on Zoe Slagle's outreach list. Last year she attended 27 workshops throughout the State.

The workshops fall into two categories: those Ms. Slagle initiates herself, and those she's asked to address. Some workshops are large, with as many as 2,000 participants. Others attract smaller groups.

Because of the hours of operation of child care centers, usually 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Ms. Slagle finds it best to offer the same material two or three times a day. That way more child care center employees can attend and benefit. Usually, the State coordinator addresses groups of up to 150 people in sessions that run about 2 hours each.

In addition to child care center employees, workshop participants often include representatives from professional child care groups, county health departments, agencies which sponsor family and group day care homes, and others. Some are from centers and homes participating in the CCFP. Others are from centers and homes which may be eligible.

Ms. Slagle always makes sure she allows plenty of time for people to approach her and ask questions. Many people seem to feel more comfortable calling her for more information after they have actually met her. "We've sent publications to everyone under the sun," the State coordinator says, "but we get the best results after we meet people at a workshop."

Visuals are helpful

She uses posters and overhead projection transparencies and other visuals—which she usually makes herself—to show exactly what she's talking about. She also uses movies and filmstrips, sometimes borrowed from such sources as the National Agriculture Library at Beltsville, Maryland, the Michigan State Library, or the Michigan School Food Service Association.

Ms. Slagle's office has purchased a number of films to use at workshops and lend to others interested in holding their own workshops. Centers, family day care sponsors,

and high schools are among those who have borrowed films.

How material is selected

When possible, Ms. Slagle aims her material at child care center employees who work at specific tasks. For instance, when she's addressing a group of cooks she tells them why it's smart to "cost out" recipes and exactly how to do it. She tells them how to cook and store certain foods, and instructs them in sanitation.

Ms. Slagle also explains the program's meal pattern and offers menu and recipe ideas. She feels it's important that teachers as well as other center employees know the meal requirements.

Since the staffs often eat with the children, they can help make sure the children get fully nutritious meals. "Most centers serve family style," Ms. Slagle explains, "and this is allowed if they encourage the children to eat each meal component."

When working with child care center directors, the State coordinator provides administrative information, such as changes in requirements. But she also covers such subjects as menu planning.

For people already operating the Child Care Food Program, the workshops offer opportunities to improve their skills. For people interested in learning about the program, the workshops offer opportunities to see how it works, and to talk to others who are already involved.

Meetings and media

Another important part of Zoe Slagle's outreach program is working with advocacy groups, professional organizations, media people, and others who can help her spread the word about the program.

She meets regularly with advocacy groups to make sure they understand

the program, so they can inform others effectively. While many advocacy groups are small, they are active. In fact, many call Ms. Slagle—sometimes to offer names of organizations to contact, sometimes to see if she's doing her job.

The State coordinator talks with newspaper, radio and television people to encourage them to publicize the program. She also talks with people in other government agencies, whose information staffs can often provide valuable assistance.

Ms. Slagle says she gets a lot of help from food service specialist Jean McFadden from the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service. Ms. McFadden frequently helps get CCFP information published in Extension Service publications.

Reaching out with publications

Zoe Slagle's own publications are of two types. One type explains the CCFP and the other tells how to run it. To attract new participants, Ms. Slagle mails to every licensed child care center and to each day care home in Michigan.

Her first mailing is a small flyer giving the CCFP basics. She follows it up

with more specific information, describing reimbursement rates, where to apply, what type of records participating centers must keep, and other pertinent information.

To those who respond, Ms. Slagle sends a large application packet, which includes sample copies of the necessary records and a detailed planning guide. She also sends a sample press release, which participating centers must distribute to their local newspapers, and an application. Her last mailing brought in 50 new applicants. After a center is approved, she keeps the director updated with vital program information

Distributes many materials

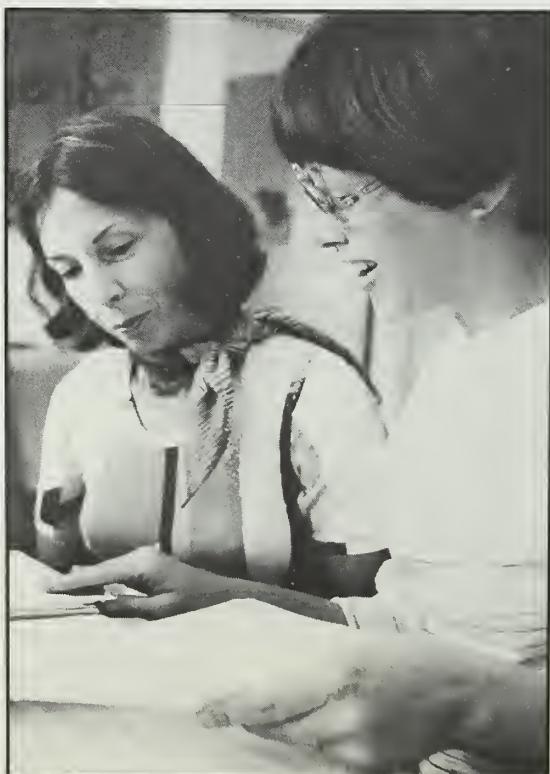
Ms. Slagle prepares much of this material herself, working closely with the printer to see that flyers and publications are simple, well designed and neatly printed. She gets quantities of other publications from USDA, the Florida Department of Citrus, and other government and private sources.

The State coordinator turns out a monthly publication called "Stone Soup," which takes its title from a children's story. "Stone Soup" goes to 1,000 child centers, day care home sponsors, educators, groups and organizations which are involved in child care or CCFP outreach. All program sponsors get it automatically. Everyone else must ask to be put on the mailing list.

"Stone Soup" gives information about how to run the Child Care Food Program. It relays news about sanitation, requirements, and changes in reimbursement rates. It also offers recipes, advice and other practical information. "The materials have to be easily understandable, but still tell child care employees everything they need to know to run an effective program," says Ms. Slagle.

Visits centers and sponsors

In addition to keeping in touch with



Zoe Slagle (left) meets with the director of a Michigan center.

participating centers through publications, Ms. Slagle also phones them and makes personal visits. Usually the phone calls are to discuss a particular problem, like a claim, but they give her the chance to discuss the center's operation generally.

She makes personal visits on an appointment basis. Last year, the State coordinator visited 63 of the 390 participating centers. She also visited several family day care sponsors to see how they were reviewing the homes for which they were responsible. She visits individual homes only for spot checks.

Ms. Slagle arrives for a typical review 1 hour before mealtime, so she can have plenty of time to talk with the center director. She then goes over the center's records for free and reduced-price meals, examines the kitchen and storeroom, and checks quality of food served. She spends considerable time with the cooks, discussing menus and answering any questions they have.

She also reviews equipment and tells directors when she feels it should be improved. She often helps centers apply for USDA equipment funds to make these improvements.

At the end of the review, Ms. Slagle goes over everything with the director—good points, bad points—and offers suggestions for improvement. She follows up her visit with a letter citing everything discussed at the exit conference.

She has found that this close attention gives the CCFP good "word of mouth" advertising that helps her get new centers into the program.

In Michigan, since last year, participation in the Child Care Food Program has grown from 272 centers serving 8,741 children to 390 centers serving 13,020 children. The number of homes participating has grown from 552 serving 1,084 children to 1,200 homes serving 3,500 children.

But there are still more centers and homes eligible for the program, and Zoe Slagle says she's determined to reach them.

by Russell T. Forte

A city agency becomes a family day care sponsor

In Washington, the Seattle Department of Human Resources serves as the sponsoring agency for nearly 200 family day care homes participating in the Child Care Food Program.

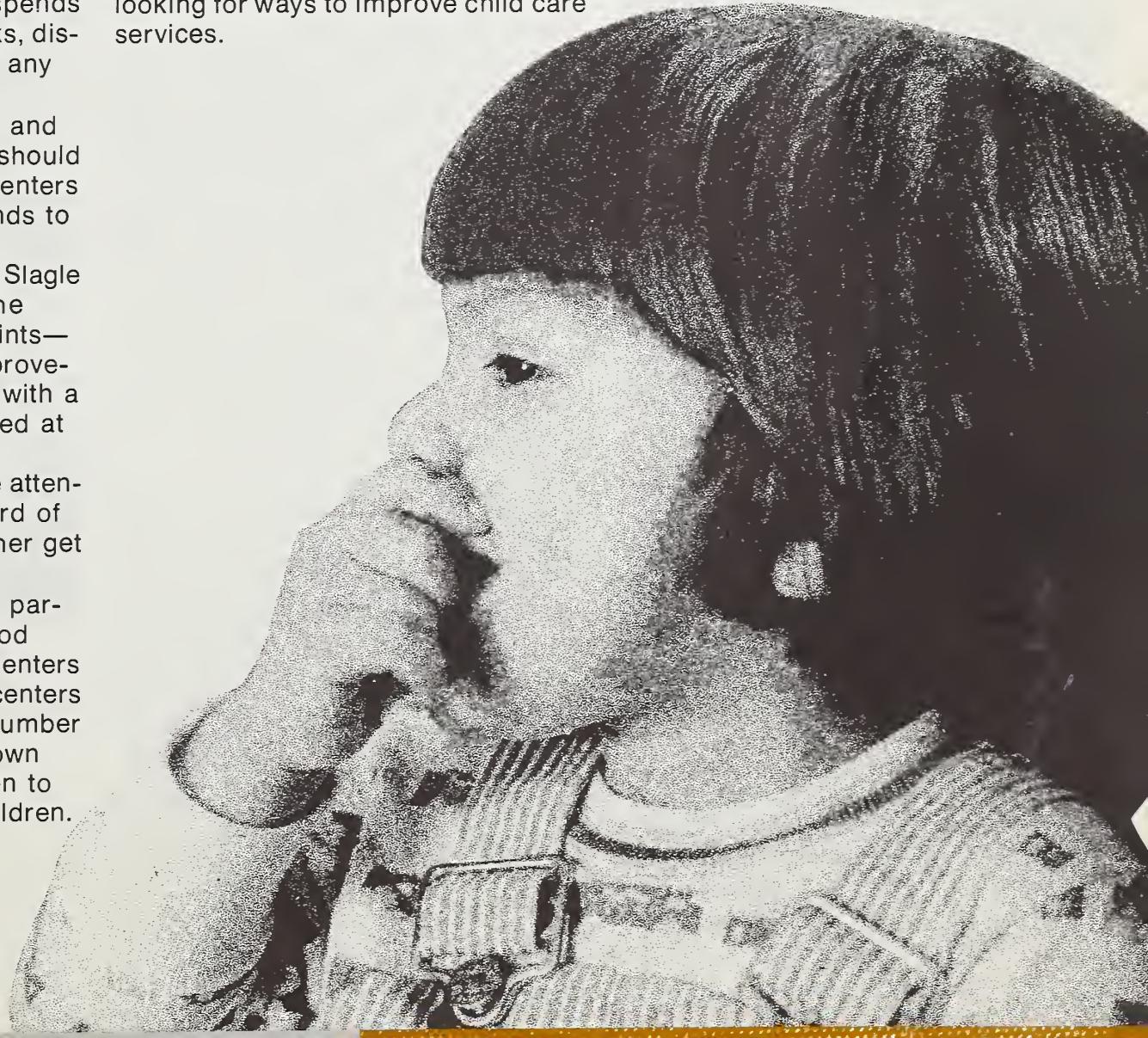
This is one of the few instances where a city agency has become a Child Care Food Program sponsor for day care homes, and the development of the Seattle program may be of special interest to city governments looking for ways to improve child care services.

But Seattle's experience also offers valuable lessons for much smaller public and private agencies interested in sponsoring the program. For no matter what its size—whether it is an individual day care center, a community service organization, a county social service department or another agency—every sponsor must face some basic organizational tasks in recruiting and working with family day care homes.

Seattle program began in 1976

The people at the Seattle Department of Human Resources decided to apply to sponsor the program in 1976, when a dynamic young woman named Randi Reinholt convinced them of a very important need.

"When the program first became available," Ms. Reinholt explained,



"there was a tremendous fear of government red tape surrounding the program here. The private nonprofit organizations eligible to act as sponsors didn't get involved, feeling the paperwork would be too much of a burden.

"So here was this program with great potential for child day care, and no one using it," she said. "I studied it and concluded that it couldn't possibly be *that* difficult to administer."

Ms. Reinholt approached Seattle's Department of Human Resources with her findings to see whether they would be interested in becoming the sponsor for the Seattle area. The people at the department were familiar with her work. She originally served on their staff as one of the first coordinators of the summer food service program, and had returned each year to coordinate the program.

The Department welcomed her as a year-round staff member, and gave her the go ahead to file an application with FNS. When approval came, Randi Reinholt wasted no time in enlisting homes. Within 7 months, she had signed up 122 providers, serving approximately 800 children.

Mailings were the first step

Explaining the strategy responsible for this rapid growth, Ms. Reinholt said she and her co-workers began by identifying the homes in areas of greatest need.

"We wanted to reach first those people who would benefit most," she said, "so our first push was toward those Seattle communities that were most economically deprived."

To accomplish this, Ms. Reinholt obtained from the State licensing agency a list of names and addresses of all licensed day care providers in the Seattle area. "Because the program is for only licensed day care providers," she said, "it was really quite simple to find out just who they were and to get into direct contact with them."

Using the list and her own demographic understanding of the Seattle area, Ms. Reinholt identified the providers she wanted to reach first. She sent each a special mailer which described the program and explained how providers and children could benefit.

The mailer outlined, step by step, the procedures a day care provider must follow in order to join.

Other efforts also helpful

To reinforce the direct mailings, Randi Reinholt also spoke to various groups throughout the community, including classes at local colleges. She especially wanted to reach parents.

"You really have to cover all the bases to get a new program off the ground," she explained. "Direct communications with the providers was a good beginning, but to reinforce that, I spoke to many parents whose children are in family day care situations.

"If these parents were to approach their providers with questions about the program," she said, "the providers might be more apt to seek information, and possibly join."

Ms. Reinholt also prepared a press release on the program and offered it to the local media. "Quite frankly, I didn't expect to receive any coverage on it. But, to my surprise, it received great reception by the Seattle media. Apparently they need our information, just as much as we need them to disseminate it."

Participating day care homes were another good source of publicity. Ms. Reinholt believes that much of the program's growth is due to the word of mouth efforts of the providers. "The Child Care Food Program is a good program," she said, "and a lot of people here have gotten behind it, spreading the word to the right people."

In explaining the program to day care providers, the Seattle coordinators were careful to select their words tactfully. "You have to be careful not to insult the providers' previous efforts at food service," Ms. Reinholt said.

"If you say, 'Now you can serve better food,' providers may feel that you are slighting their present service," she continued. "We prefer to present the program as an edge against increasing food prices, and then to lead into a discussion of the nutritional aspects of the program by explaining the USDA meal requirements."

Part of a process

Getting a new program off the ground is a big job, and recruiting



Seattle coordinator Randi Reinholt visits a day care home.

Working on Recordkeeping

new providers is an ongoing process. But Department staff members also recognize the importance of efforts to ensure the continuing participation of providers which have already joined.

"We see it as our responsibility as a sponsoring agency to make it as easy as possible for providers to fulfill the program requirements," Randi Reinholt said. "If we continue to do that, both the providers and USDA will be satisfied, and things will run smoothly. So far, so good."

According to the program coordinator, the basic requirement for a smooth running program is good communication between sponsor and provider. Ms. Reinholt's office is always open to providers who have questions, and she and her co-workers are continually looking for ways to clarify difficult areas. For example, when they found that providers were most concerned about requirements and recordkeeping, they devised a special set of handout sheets for reference.

Staff work pays off

The extra energy Randi Reinholt and the Seattle Department of Human Resources devote to the providers pays off in the form of valuable nutrition to the children in Seattle's family day care program.

"Whenever I feel I can't possibly fill out one more form or speak to another group," the program coordinator said, "all I have to do is think about the people in the homes and what they are doing for the community. I realize that it is important that someone connect this program with people, and keep it running." □

by Rick Rice

One of the most difficult challenges facing a center or sponsoring organization is that of keeping accurate records on participation and expenditures. When they join the Child Care Food Program, many centers and sponsors are already receiving funding from more than one source. And multiple funding complicates recordkeeping and accountability.

What can State coordinators do to help make this task easier? Maryland's State coordinators have found that by working closely with centers and sponsors, they can help them anticipate and solve many of their problems. They do this in a number of different ways.

How Maryland coordinators work with participants

In Maryland, there are over 200 day care centers participating in the Child Care Food Program, under the sponsorship of 105 organizations. More than half of the centers receive funding from more than one source, and multiple funding complicates recordkeeping and accountability.

Knowing the difficulties centers and sponsors face, Child Care Food Program specialist Sharolyn High makes special efforts to keep "red tape" and administrative headaches to a minimum.

Ms. High works in the State Department of Education's Office of Food Service Programs. During the 8 years she's been a program supervisor, Sharolyn High says she's learned the value of meeting personally with participants to explain recordkeeping and reporting.

Meets with applicants

Ms. High sets up an interview with

every applicant. During the interview, she goes through all the application materials and explains reimbursement policies and procedures. She carefully reviews the State's training guide, which she gives to each sponsoring organization.

The guide explains the basics of daily recordkeeping and monthly reporting and provides instructions on how to complete the claim for reimbursement. The manual addresses such basics as:

- **Files:** What kind of information to maintain and for how long.
- **Participation:** How to collect participation data, and what are the differences between participation and attendance.
- **Operating costs:** What costs are allowable for reimbursement.



Sharolyn High (left) offers some advice on recordkeeping.

- **Expenditures:** How to classify program expenditures.

Many centers have experience

As Sharolyn High explains, by the time center personnel come to her office to apply for the Child Care Food Program, most have already demonstrated some basic ability in recordkeeping.

Even if the centers are brand new, the staffs have had the experience of collecting the information needed to apply for a license to operate. To meet Maryland's licensing requirements, every center must provide information on enrollment, attendance, staffing, and weekly menu plans.

Many applications are from centers which have been operating for some time. Their directors, therefore, have extensive experience in working within a budget, and most are reporting to at least one public or private agency.

However, even if the staffs have had previous experience with budgets and recordkeeping, the Maryland program specialist finds it useful to carefully review with them what the Child Care Food Program will require.

Completing a sample claim

To familiarize potential sponsors with the claim process, Ms. High estimates what program costs and participation might be. Using those estimates, she develops a sample claim, which also gives the sponsor some idea of what to expect in terms of reimbursement.

The sponsor is often able to complete the application forms and instruction materials in the course of the meeting with Ms. High. Many can begin immediately.

"Once they're approved to operate," Ms. High says, "we suggest that, as they get ready to do the first month's claim, they either come in again or give us a call on the phone. Then we'll go through the reporting procedures again, step by step."

The program specialist sees this review procedure as an effective preventive measure. "If you work with a sponsor on that first month's claim, and you get that one straight, problems are minimal after that," she explains. "But if you really foul up the first reporting, it's going to take a long time to straighten it out."

Sponsors must provide the State agency with monthly totals of par-

ticipation data by meal type. The sponsor must maintain daily data sheets supporting these monthly totals, even though they do not submit daily data to the State. In addition, sponsors must report all income specifically relating to food service.

Sponsors get worksheets

The State staff recognizes that recordkeeping is a big job. And to assist centers, they provide sample worksheets on which to record daily participation and expenditures. Most of Maryland's Child Care Food Program sponsors say they use these worksheets because it makes filling out the monthly claim form easier.

The monthly worksheet includes spaces for daily tallies of breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and morning and afternoon snacks.

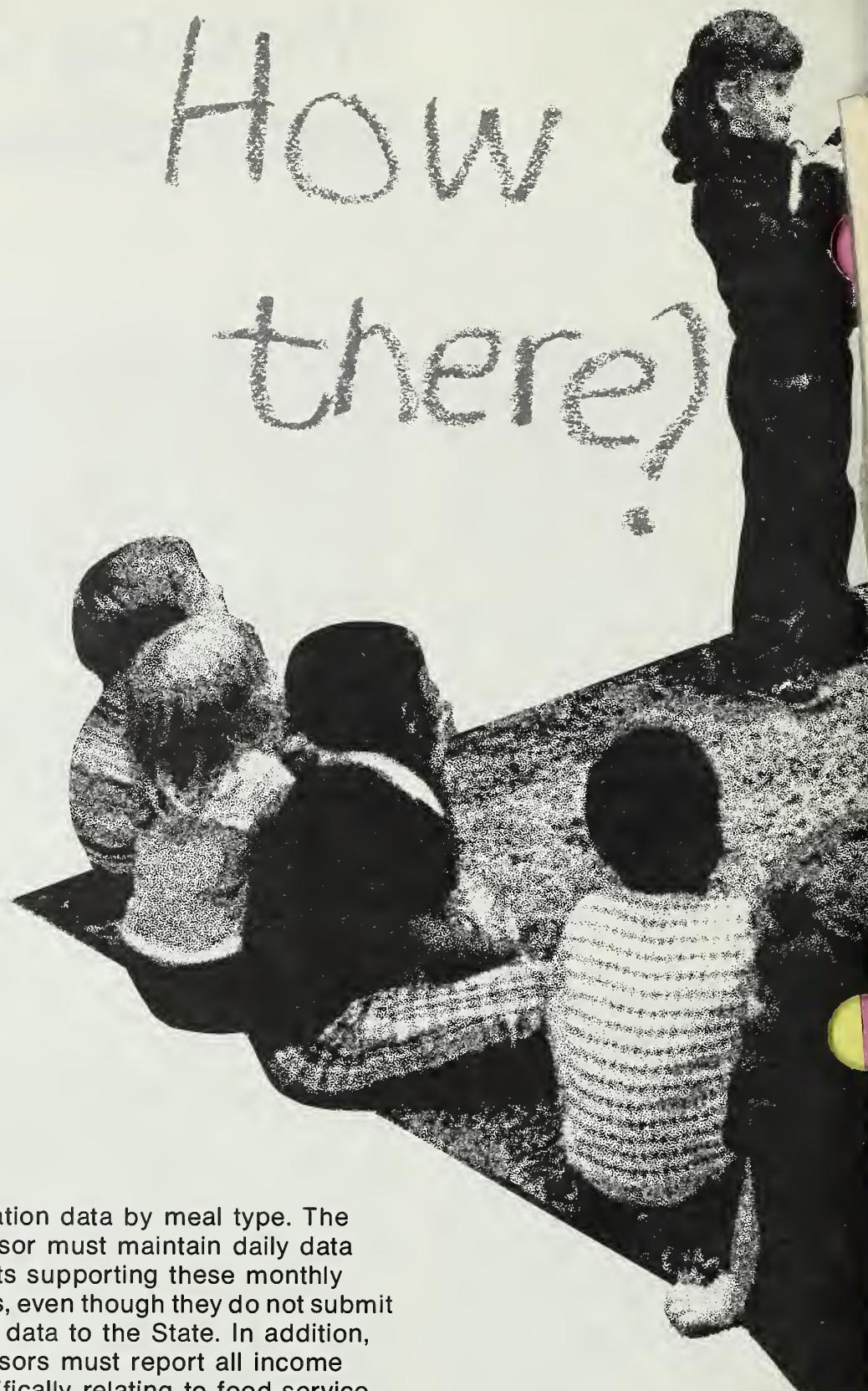
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kitchen," Sharolyn High explains. "The cook can actually record, as she serves the meals, the number which she's prepared and is serving."

The form also provides for a daily tally of expenditures as they are incurred, by vendor and by category—food service or administrative.

The worksheets generate the data for the monthly claim for reimbursement. "If sponsors have maintained their worksheets as we've suggested," Ms. High says, "they need only take the totals from the sheets to complete the claim for reimbursement."

Most of Maryland's child care



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Most of Maryland's child care

programs do not use full cost accounting, and the State does not require centers to show the full cost of producing meals.

However, center staffs must document any costs claimed for reimbursement under the Child Care Food Program.

Sharolyn High has found that in most centers, recordkeepers need only document what she calls direct expenses—actual food purchases and maximum reimbursement. It's

generally not necessary to document overhead and indirect costs.

Centers file monthly claim

Maryland's Child Care Food Program coordinators ask centers to report food program participation by the fifth of each month. The State staff provides pre-addressed postcards for reporting the necessary information. Centers fill out this "quick report" postcard on the last day of the month and drop it in the mail.

Child care centers and sponsoring agencies submit their actual claims for reimbursement by the 15th of the month. The claim must be signed and certified by an authorized representative of the sponsor, and it must contain complete participation as well as expenditure data.

When Sharolyn High gets the claims, she sends them on to the people in the State Department of Education's finance office, who verify the information. When the claim has been approved, the Department issues a letter of transmittal to the Comptroller's office in Annapolis, and this authorizes payment.

Feel free to call

"I think our sponsors know we're being fair with them, and that we'll provide as much help as we possibly can," Ms. High says. "Most of them feel very free to call us." □

Addressing key problems

The State coordinators address recordkeeping problems in their individual and group training efforts.

Staff members feel sponsor training is very important, and they place special emphasis on identifying needs and targeting the training so that it reaches the right audience.

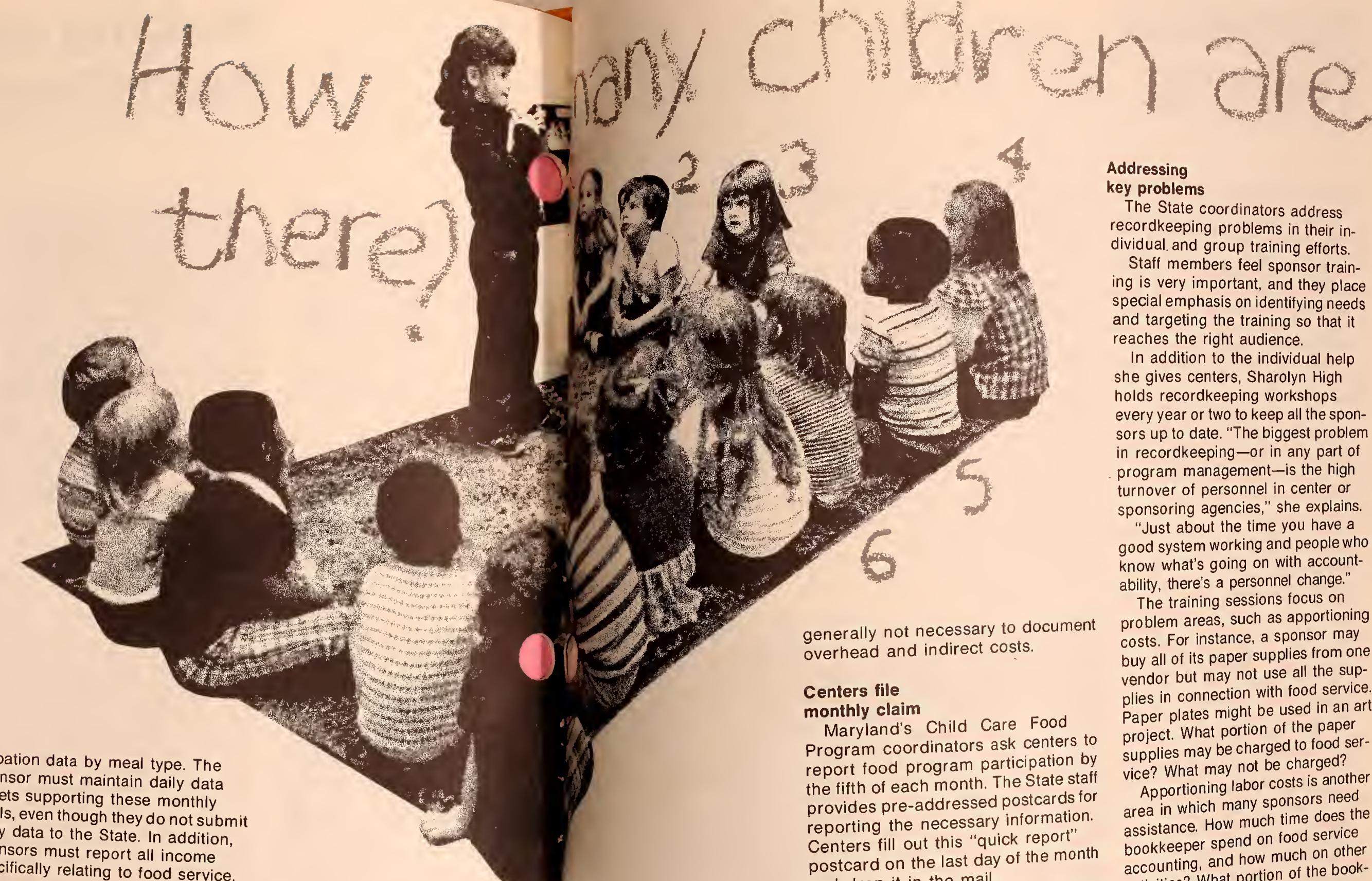
In addition to the individual help she gives centers, Sharolyn High holds recordkeeping workshops every year or two to keep all the sponsors up to date. "The biggest problem in recordkeeping—or in any part of program management—is the high turnover of personnel in center or sponsoring agencies," she explains.

"Just about the time you have a good system working and people who know what's going on with accountability, there's a personnel change."

The training sessions focus on problem areas, such as apportioning costs. For instance, a sponsor may buy all of its paper supplies from one vendor but may not use all the supplies in connection with food service. Paper plates might be used in an art project. What portion of the paper supplies may be charged to food service? What may not be charged?

Apportioning labor costs is another area in which many sponsors need assistance. How much time does the bookkeeper spend on food service accounting, and how much on other activities? What portion of the bookkeeping's salary is a food service labor expense?

The workshops enable Sharolyn High to answer questions like these. They also provide opportunities to encourage the sponsors to call on the State agency whenever they need help.



Providing Training

Several articles in other sections have shown how State and local program administrators train center staffs and day care providers. Many offer guidance and technical assistance through publications, workshops, meetings, and personal visits.

This section focuses on tailoring training to the particular needs of family day care providers. The first article describes an ongoing series of training programs organized by people in the Rhode Island State government. The second is about a project carried out by graduate students from the University of Connecticut.

Rhode Island offers weekly meetings and other programs

When the Child Care Food Program opened its doors to family and group day care homes, Rhode Island had already laid the groundwork for providing the training new participants would need.

For 10 years, the Nation's smallest State has operated a family day care system through the State Department of Social Rehabilitation. There are 450 homes in the system.

As in most States, in Rhode Island the State Department of Education administers the child nutrition programs—school lunch and breakfast, summer food service, and child care feeding. In most States, however, day care centers and social agencies are the primary channels of funds and nutrition education to family day care mothers. These agencies are "sponsors" handling the administrative details required to reimburse mothers and assure that the meals served meet nutritional standards.

The operation of a statewide family day care program by a government agency is unique to Rhode Island. And the extent to which the State provides training to family day care mothers or fathers is also unique.

While carried out by a State government, the ideas could be useful

to child care administrators in local and Federal agencies as well.

Some special considerations

When people think of setting up a training program, they usually have several immediate concerns: determining the purpose and focus of the program; getting the right people to teach the sessions; planning appropriate material geared to the needs of the trainees; finding a good, convenient location; and enlisting participants and making sure they are informed of all the necessary details.

In most cases, planners do not have to worry about how participants will actually get to the sessions or who will take care of their children while they are there. But in planning training for

family day care mothers, these are very significant concerns. From its beginning, the Rhode Island program has addressed these concerns.

Began as a television project

The training program grew out of a series of 10 television shows on child development shown throughout the State during the fall of 1974. The series was developed as a public service by WPRI-TV in cooperation with the Department of Social Rehabilitation's Office of Day Care Services, headed by Marion Goldsmith.

Using funds from a grant from the State Division of Vocational Education, Ms. Goldsmith's staff arranged for family day care mothers to meet in groups to watch the programs to-



Day care mothers and "their" children arrive for a training session in Woonsocket, R.I.

gether. The staff provided transportation to several different locations. They also provided babysitters.

After viewing each show, the mothers discussed the content and how it applied to their work. One of the 30-minute shows focuses on nutrition, stressing food as a learning tool.

Because of the success of the weekly meetings, the State staff decided to look for ways to continue to bring the day care mothers together for training. They arranged for 12 family day care mothers to study at Rhode Island College and set up training programs as part of their field course work.

Arrangement worked out

According to Marion Goldsmith, the arrangement worked out well for everyone involved. The trainees have become program consultants and have continued to provide sessions for interested day care mothers.

The sessions receive enthusiastic support from the mothers, whose participation is strictly voluntary. As in the television project, transportation is provided, and there are always activities for the children. Most of the sessions are in community action agencies, churches, or libraries. The libraries are especially convenient locations, since the librarians frequently volunteer to entertain the children with a story hour.

Preparing for the food program

When the Child Care Food Program came along, the weekly meetings were readily available as a way to reach the mothers. To prepare them for the food program, the State had to do two important things: find a way to include professional nutrition training; and to set up a mechanism for reviewing meal plans and reimbursement.

For starters, the State Department of Social Rehabilitation assigned two professionals to develop a series of nutrition workshops that would be mandatory for all family day care

mothers. Betsy Perra, an Extension Service home economist who works with the Department, and Marion Sperling, the Department's own home economist, together developed and gave a series of workshops at the five resource centers where the mothers were meeting regularly for training.

Series of three sessions

Each workshop had three sessions, given on different mornings. The first session covered basic food groups and nutrients. The second reinforced these concepts, adding health and sanitation. And the third dealt with meal patterns and menu planning.

"We built on the nutrition the mothers already knew," Betsy Perra explained. "Many were aware that milk is a source of calcium, and orange juice is a source of vitamin C. But they didn't always know other sources of these important nutrients.

"When we got into something they didn't understand, you could feel them paying more attention," Marion Sperling added. For instance, she said, the mothers were confused about the difference between starches and whole grains.

Including make-up sessions, the home economists gave a total of 13 workshops with 39 sessions in all. The workshops began in the spring of 1977 and, after a break for the summer, continued into the fall.

The State staff plans to hold the nutrition workshops periodically for family day care mothers who join the Child Care Food Program. To receive reimbursement, new participants will have to complete all three sessions.

Reimbursement and monitoring

To handle the reimbursement and monitoring aspects of the program, the State set up a new unit. The unit includes two social workers, Bill Ciresi and Karin Rattey, and two neighborhood aides, Renee Warren and Dianne Pollard.

All four make individual home visits to work personally with mothers in explaining how to fill out the reimbursement forms. They assist mothers who

have literacy problems and arrange for Spanish and Portuguese translators if necessary. They also offer special training sessions on food service problems.

"The mothers often have trouble with portions," explained Karin Rattey, "and we hope to have a workshop on that subject alone. We want the mothers to be able to visualize portions, and perhaps it would help them to set up various snacks and lunches themselves."

Through their visits and special training sessions, Karin Rattey and her co-workers provide continuing training for family day care mothers.

Weekly meetings another source

The State staff also encourages family day care mothers to take advantage of the continuing training available through the weekly meetings conducted by program consultants. The meetings focus on various areas of interest. Food and nutrition are two of the frequent topics.

For example, "Food and Children" was the discussion topic at one training session held in Woonsocket last summer.

The session was conducted by three consultants—Doris Berard, Simone Lambert, and Bea Vaillancourt. As the training got started in one part of the meeting room, the children began their activities on the other side, separated by a room divider. Three volunteers supervised and entertained the children.

Participants share ideas

Discussion leader Doris Berard began by asking all the participants to explain what the word "food" meant to them. Then she asked them to share their ideas on the learning experiences children can gain while working or playing with food.

One participant, Jessie Lindsay, ex-

plained that one 8-year-old girl in her care enjoys reading recipes as she (Ms. Lindsay) prepares the food.

"Children can learn about texture and color," offered Simone Lambert, adding that one activity can teach many things.

Measuring, counting, telling time, safety and table manners—the group listed many things a child can learn in the kitchen.

When talk turned to food preparation, participant Cleora Coleman told how she organizes meals in advance. Karen Richardson said that she had started freezing yogurt with fruit for the next day's dessert.

Ideas are summarized

All these ideas and recipes would later be included in the weekly resume the leaders regularly prepare and distribute. From the previous meeting, the Woonsocket participants got a reference list of vitamins.

The training coordinators suggested that family day care mothers share this information with parents, along with reports on what the children are eating.

"It's important to tell parents what the child eats and how well he or she accepts food," Bea Vaillancourt told the group, explaining that this is an important part of the day care provider's role.

However, she added a word of caution in working with parents. "You may know and be proud that the meal you serve may be the child's main meal of the day," she said. "A working mother may simply be too tired to cook much at night. But be careful—remember, it's our job to reassure parents, not put them down."

by Catherine Tim Jensen

Connecticut students hold series of workshops

Twenty-eight family day care mothers took part in a nutrition train-

ing project developed last year by the University of Connecticut. The project involved a series of workshops organized and led by graduate students.

The workshops were held at three Hartford child care centers, and they covered such topics as food preparation, menu planning, assessing food advertising and labeling, and basic nutrition.

While the content and basic educational techniques were traditional, the methods used were not. The workshops were flexible, lively and fun, and informal conversation was the basic means of communication. Activities included food preparation and tasting parties for the children, who accompanied the mothers to the centers.

The nutrition training project was developed by the University of Connecticut's Department of Nutrition Sciences as a grant under Section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act. The project was funded through the Connecticut Department of Education, which administers the Child Care Food Program in cooperation with FNS and local agencies.

Three day care centers in Hartford were projects sites, and a total of five graduate students, 28 mothers and 60 children were involved.

Lunch menu analyzed

At one of several workshops at the Women's League Day Care Center, four day care mothers analyzed their lunch menus from the previous day. They had written the menus on paper plates divided into four parts. The quarters represented the four familiar food groups—fruits and vegetables, meat, milk, and bread.

Having completed three workshops, participants Leona Walker, Mavis Norman, and Mary Allen were familiar with more sophisticated terms. The mothers had learned about vitamins A, B, and C, and about minerals, protein, calcium and iron.

They had talked about why each is important to a growing child. Still, the plate was a handy visual guide for review.

The menus reviewed were as varied as the mothers and the children in their care, but they all met the basic nutritional requirements. The meat-protein portions had included lunch meat, tuna, homemade spaghetti with meat sauce, and chicken soup. Each food group was open for comment.

"My children don't like peas and carrots mixed," said Annie Webb.

"Mine like vegetables if they can eat them with their fingers," observed Mary Allen.

When the conversation turned to meat and meat alternatives, graduate student Arlene Edmonds reminded the mothers that peanut butter and cheese count as protein foods.

Ms. Edmond's comment showed the importance of repetition and reinforcement, which she says is particularly useful in changing food habits and preferences. Ms. Edmond and Sue Rump, the other student assigned to the Women's League Center, used this method frequently in their discussions with the mothers and in their activities with the children.

Preparing and testing food

Since every workshop involved preparing and tasting food, the mothers usually didn't have to wait long to actually see how their children would react to the food or ideas they had been discussing.

For example, one day when vegetables were the topic, the mothers prepared special snacks for the children to taste. Raw cauliflower, cherry tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, celery and carrots got a new look for the occasion. The mothers decorated the vegetables with cream cheese and



peanut butter, using a pastry bag. I tried crinkle cutters to make more interesting.

"How do I cut it?" said Mary Allen, contemplating cauliflower as a potential raw snack for the first time.

"I would never serve these things raw," said Mavis Norman.

To the surprise of some of the mothers, the raw vegetables were a success with the children. By far the most popular were the carrots.

A variety of exercises

The workshops included a variety of exercises, which generated some interesting conversations.

Sometimes the mothers took turns role-playing. One day, for instance, one of the mothers pretended to be a cereal company president talking with her board of directors about how to "sell" cereal. The result? She and the board decided to appeal to children by adding more sugar, new shapes, and colors. In discussing the exercise later, the mothers said it made them aware of the need to be alert to merchandising techniques. They said that it's important to judge a cereal on the basis of nutritional value

and to examine labels closely for lists of ingredients.

In all, there were seven workshops held at the Women's League Center on Wednesday mornings from 10 to 11:30 a.m. On alternate Wednesdays, Arlene Edmonds and Sue Rump visited the mothers in their homes. During home visits, the mothers talked about their individual concerns. One day, for instance, Ms. Rump talked with Mary Allen about preparing breakfast for the one child in her care who arrives at 6 a.m.

Materials provided

As students gaining field experience, the two workshop leaders were also involved in the development of educational materials. They helped plan and prepare a variety of materials for the mothers, including notebooks, charts for recording the meals, shopping guides, and menus for meals which require no cooking. All of the materials were developed with their guidance by the profes-

sional graphics staff available to the Connecticut Extension Service.

Ms. Edmonds and Ms. Rump also developed slide presentations, sometimes using the mothers and children themselves to illustrate a point. They found nutrition posters appropriate for each workshop and hung them in the small staff kitchen they used as a meeting place in the day care center.

Grant funds paid for the food used during demonstration, the graphics, notebooks, and small equipment for the mothers, and for the baby-sitters who cared for the children during the sessions.

Follow-up activities

Since the project's conclusion, monthly group sessions at the day care center continue to give mothers opportunities to talk over nutrition and reimbursement matters. However, many workshop participants said they were sad to see the weekly sessions end. □

by Catherine Tim Jensen

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		Age 1-3	Age 3-6	Age 6-12
BREAKFAST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
	<input type="checkbox"/> Juice or Fruit	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
SNACK (supplemental food)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk or			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Juice or Fruit	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bread or	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
LUNCH/SUPPER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meat or Poultry or Fish or	1 ounce	1 1/2 ounces	2 ounces
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheese or	1 ounce	1 1/2 ounces	2 ounces
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs or	1	1	1
	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanut Butter or	2 Tablespoons	3 Tablespoons	4 Tablespoons
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dried Beans and Peas	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fruits (2 or more) or			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables (2 or more) or			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruits & Vegetables to total	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice

